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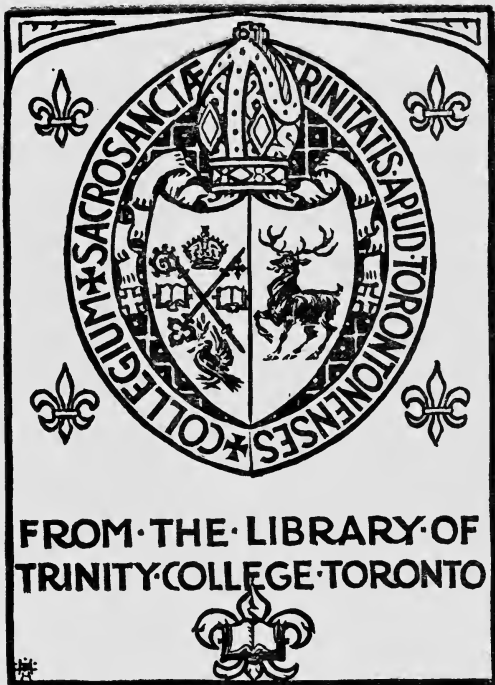
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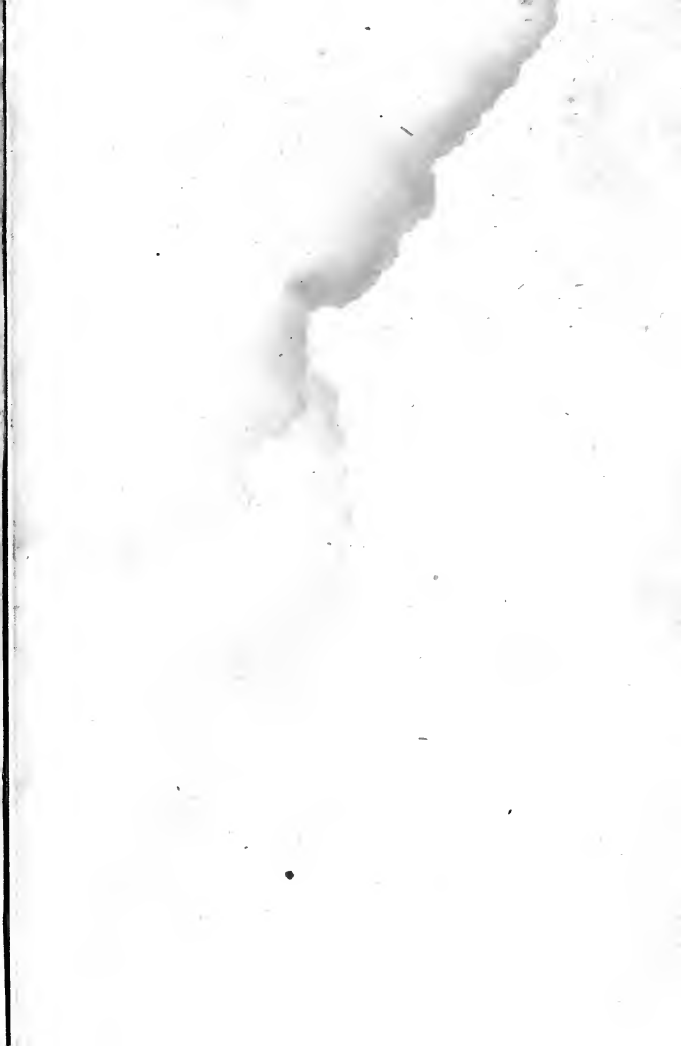
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AN
ADDRESS
TO
YOUNG PERSONS
ABOUT TO BE
CONFIRMED.

BY
DANIEL WILSON, D. D.,
BISHOP OF CALCUTTA.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES,

BY
BENJAMIN DORR, D. D.,
RECTOR OF CHRIST CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA.

Philadelphia:
R. S. H. GEORGE, 26 SOUTH FIFTH STREET.

1842.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE following admirable little work is a reprint from the seventeenth London edition, without any alteration in the text. A few notes have been added, where the subject seemed to require a somewhat fuller explanation than the author had given it. The name of Bishop Wilson is the highest recommendation which a book of this kind can receive, and will no doubt secure for it a wide circulation among the members of our communion.

Although many very excellent tracts on the subject of Confirmation have been before published, yet the present Editor has never met with one which, according to his judgment, was in all respects so well calculated to aid young persons in preparing for that holy ordinance.

Entertaining this opinion of its merits, he felt desirous of having it re-published here, more especially for the benefit of the younger members of his own flock ; at the same time believing that it would be as favourably received by churchmen in this country, as it has been by those in England. Commending it to all who are about to be confirmed, he unites with the Author in his prayer, that "God, by His Holy Spirit, may bless it, to their spiritual and eternal benefit."

B. DORR.

PHILADELPHIA, JANUARY, 1842.

AN
ADDRESS TO YOUNG PERSONS
ABOUT TO BE
CONFIRMED.

MY YOUNG FRIENDS,

The Bishop having given notice of his intention of holding a Confirmation in this Diocese, I am desirous of addressing you as plainly as I can, on the many important subjects which you are in consequence called to consider. May God, by his Holy Spirit, bless what I may write to your spiritual and eternal benefit.

I will endeavour to explain to you,

- I. What Confirmation is.
- II. Who are the persons invited to be confirmed.

- III. What is the preparation they should make.
 - IV. What are the chief parts in the order of Confirmation to be used by the Bishop.
 - V. What are the blessings which they who are confirmed may expect to receive.
 - VI. What are the special duties to which they will be bound.
 - VII. What are the motives by which they should be influenced.
- Concluding with suitable prayers.

I. *What Confirmation is.*

The word Confirmation means strengthening or establishing. It is applied to the religious rite of laying on of hands, because the young person then *confirms* and ratifies, in his own person, the vows which had been made for him at his baptism; and the Bishop *confirms* and strengthens him in his pious resolutions, by prayer and imposition of his hands. The simple design of it is, that those who have been devoted to God in infancy in the sacrament of baptism, may, when they come to years of discretion, take upon themselves the solemn engage-

ments which were made for them by their godfathers and godmothers, by a public and direct acknowledgment and *confirmation* of their baptismal covenant with God, before the Bishop and the whole Church ; and that they may receive the benefit of public prayer and episcopal benediction, with the ancient and scriptural rite of laying on of hands, in order that they may be so *confirmed* and strengthened by God's Holy Spirit, as to be enabled to perform their vows, and adorn their Christian profession, and may be afterwards admitted to the Lord's Table, as complete members of the visible Church of Christ.

This rite is derived from the practice of the Apostles. We are informed, that when the inhabitants of Samaria had been converted and baptized, and had received the word of God, the Apostles, St. Peter and St. John, were sent to lay their hands on these new converts, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. Acts viii. 14—17. And the disciples of Ephesus, after they had been baptized in the name of Jesus, were confirmed by St. Paul, who laid his hands upon

them, and they received the Holy Ghost. Acts xix. 1—7. And though the extraordinary gifts of the Blessed Spirit have ceased, yet the ordinary influences of his grace are still granted, and are as necessary now to the great purposes of sanctification, as in the first ages of the Church; and indeed it seems evident that the Apostle Paul alludes to the continuance of this rite, as an ordinary means of strengthening the faith of Christians, by joining it with Baptism, and describing both as among the first principles of the oracles of God. Heb. v. 12; vi. 1, 2.¹

¹ This is one of the strongest scriptural proofs, that Confirmation is an Apostolical rite.

“Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God, of the doctrine of baptism, and *laying on of hands*, and of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.” ‘The *laying on of hands*’ following in this passage immediately after ‘baptism,’ we are naturally led to conclude that the expression refers to some rite connected with baptism. The order in which the various particulars in this passage succeed

It is a point beyond all doubt, that such has been the opinion of the Church from the very times of the Apostles. Tertullian, who flourished only eighty years after St. John, and is very careful in relating the practice of the primitive Church, has these words :—"After baptism succeeds laying on of hands, by prayer calling for and inviting the Holy Spirit." De Bapt. c. 8.—St. Cyprian, who flourished about sixty years after Tertullian, remarks on the history of the Samaritan

each other, is particularly worthy of observation ; 'repentance, faith, baptism, laying on of hands ;' precisely the order of the religious services of our Church ; repentance and faith being qualifications for baptism, and laying on of hands succeeding this sacrament.

"The rank which 'the laying on of hands' holds in this verse, among the principles of the doctrine of Christ,' proves that it refers to Confirmation. Imposition of hands was, indeed, employed in conveying the ministerial authority ; and by the same ceremony the sick were healed, and pious and holy men invoked blessings on the objects of their regard. These acts, however, cannot be denoted by the laying on of hands to which the Apostle refers ; which being stated as a 'prin-

converts, "the same thing is practised among us, that they who are baptized in the Church are presented to the governors of it, that by their prayers and imposition of hands, they may obtain the Holy Ghost, and be perfected with the seal of Christ." Epist. 73. "And though," saith St. Augustine, Tract 6, in 1 Ep. John, "the speaking with tongues and working of miracles do not now attend the laying on of hands, as in the days of the Apostles, yet any one may

ciple of the doctrine of Christ,' must refer to all Christians. But these acts related not to all Christians, only to the *ministry*, who, by the laying on of hands, received the ministerial authority; to the *sick*, who, by this rite, were healed; or to the *individuals* on whom, by this ceremony, pious men invoked blessings. These acts, therefore, of the imposition of hands, could not be ranked among the 'principles of the doctrine of Christ,' in the same station with 'repentance,' with 'faith,' with the 'resurrection from the dead,' with a 'judgment to come.' We must, therefore, refer this appellation to that rite which universally prevailed in the primitive Church, and which is known, in modern times, by the name of Confirmation."—BR. HOBART.

know now whether he has received the Holy Ghost, by the love he bears to his brother, and his desire of the peace and unity of the Church of Christ." And St. Jerome speaks of it distinctly, as recommended by the custom of the whole Christian world; and then adds, "Where persons are baptized in the inferior towns by priests and deacons, the bishop travels out to them, to lay his hand upon them, and invoke the Holy Spirit." Tom. ii. p. 56. Indeed, the ceremony of imploring the divine grace by the laying on of hands, seems to have been derived from the pious and simple practice of the Patriarchs, to have been preserved among the usages of the Jews, adopted and authorized by our blessed Saviour, employed by the Apostles, and continued in the Church to the present time. In fact, the observance is so natural, so pleasing, so important, and so free from superstition, that, if there were less argument for it to be derived from scripture, it might be safely allowed to rest on the obvious ground of its eminent simplicity and usefulness. A more affecting sight is scarcely to be seen than that of a number of

young persons coming forward, in the presence of the Church, to join themselves publicly to their Saviour, in the bonds of his covenant, and to seek the paternal prayers and blessings of their Bishops on their tender and newly-formed resolutions. Every visible Church of Christ has accordingly retained either this rite of Confirmation,¹ or some other analagous to it, by which

¹ From the Apostles' days until the Reformation, fourteen hundred years, no church can be found which did not retain this rite. "At the Reformation it was preserved by all the Protestant Churches which kept the Episcopal office." Calvin himself wished to have it restored in its primitive purity; and with him agree many eminently learned and pious Presbyterian divines. In a report of a committee of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in this country, after stating the manner of administering Confirmation in the Primitive Church, it is added,—"This rite of Confirmation, thus administered to baptized children, when arrived at competent years, and previously instructed and prepared for it, with the express view of their admission to the Lord's Supper, shows clearly that the Primitive Church in her purest days, exercised the authority of a mother over her baptized children."

those who were devoted to God in their infancy, might be confirmed in their pious designs of personally following the Saviour, and might be admitted into the full communion of the body of Christ. The corrupt Church of Rome has indeed debased this primitive ordinance, as it has almost every doctrine and practice of the Scripture, and has loaded it with many unscriptural and superstitious ceremonies ; but this may only serve the more to recommend to us the native and lovely character of the rite itself, as it is retained in our Protestant Church.

II. *Who are the persons invited to be Confirmed.*

They are the younger¹ members of the Christian families who have enjoyed the blessing of being dedicated to God in their infancy, who

¹“ There are some, indeed, who, from various causes, have delayed beyond the season of youth, coming to this holy ordinance. And let those not be discouraged ; for God is always willing, through Christ, to receive the penitent sinner. But the bulk of those who come are the young. They are *those* who are not *so* young as to

have had prayers offered and vows undertaken in their behalf, who have been baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and been made partakers of all the privileges of a covenant relation to God. These persons having attained the age of reason, and being disposed and assisted by the grace of the Holy Spirit to take upon themselves the profession of their Christian faith, and ratify, in their

be unable to understand the vows they are about to make; nor so old as, by long habits of sin, to have strengthened that corruption of nature with which they were born. The Church calls upon you, as soon as she thinks you able to judge and act for yourself, to come and solemnly say to God, I will, by thy help, cleave to do what is right, and abhor what is wrong.—REV. J. W. CUNNINGHAM.

The question is sometimes asked, "Whether persons of mature age, and particularly those who have been admitted to the Communion without having received Confirmation, should come forward to this holy rite?"

"Merely on the principle of *fulfilling all righteousness*, of showing respect and submission to all the divine institutions, it is the duty of persons of this description to receive Confirmation. But it is their duty,

own name, the vows formerly made for them, are invited to present themselves to the Bishop to be confirmed. The age is not determined by the Church, but is expressed generally by the words "a competent age," which implies that none should be admitted till they can understand the nature of the obligations they are to take upon themselves, and are capable of forming, in dependence on Divine Grace, a determination to love and serve their Redeemer. It is commonly understood, however, that young per-

on another principle. Confirmation is the ordinance appointed by God for the ratification of the vows of baptism, for conveying the influences of divine grace, and for confirming all the privileges of the baptismal covenant. It must, therefore, be incumbent on Christians of all ages, and in all situations, to embrace the first opportunity of receiving an ordinance appointed by God for such important purposes. They are not released from this obligation by their having renewed the vows of baptism, and their title to its privileges in the Lord's Supper. The reception of one ordinance of the Gospel cannot exempt us from the obligation of observing the other institutions which it prescribes."—**BR. HOBART.**

sons who have attained the age of fourteen years, seriously desiring to devote themselves to God, under a sense of their need of pardon, reconciliation, and spiritual grace, are the proper persons to be encouraged and invited to join in this delightful and honourable duty.

III. *What is the preparation to be made by those who are about to be Confirmed.*

This is a most important part of my subject, and will require to be entered into at some length. May God be with us by his Holy Spirit in considering it!

I observe, then, in general, that this preparation consists in a penitent sense of sin, in an humble faith in the merits and atonement of Jesus Christ, in a sincere desire to be renewed and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and in a resolution to be devoted to the service and glory of God, according to the covenant of grace. Repentance, Faith, and Obedience, are the sum of what you are to seek for.

Remember, therefore, that you are not to prepare for Confirmation as a mere matter of form

or ceremony ; much less with a blind superstitious reliance on the outward duty : neither are you to imagine that you can make yourselves worthy of God's grace : nor are you in any respect to depend upon the performance of this duty in a way of merit or desert before God : this would be to lay the foundations of this act in pride, ignorance, and presumption. The preparation you are to make is that which becomes a sinner in approaching the Holy God as revealed in Jesus Christ, in order to enter into covenant with him.

To this end, First, *Be firmly persuaded of the truth of Christianity.* When you are about to enter on so solemn an engagement, it is important for you to review the evidences of your faith. Recollect, then, the arguments which are to be derived from the accomplishment of prophecies, and the performance of miracles ; from the character of Christ ; from the purity of his doctrines, and the excellency of his precepts, confirmed by his resurrection from the dead ; from the rapid propagation of the gospel through the world ; from its suitableness to our state and

wants ; from its actual effects on the hearts and lives of those who obey it ; and from the inefficient and debased nature of every pretended revelation.

Secondly. *Labour to be deeply affected with your lost estate as transgressors before God.* Let it be your prayer to be abased and humbled for your original and actual sins. Consider that you were born in sin, and shapen in iniquity ; remember the Holy Law of God, which requires truth in the inward parts ; compare your heart, motives, dispositions, temper, and conduct with this unerring rule ; hear the law pronounce you accursed : see the just indignation of the righteous God hanging over you ; think of the terrors of death and judgment, and the awful state of those who die in their sins : pray to the Blessed Spirit to enable you to perceive and feel, with genuine contrition of heart, the whole ruin, misery, condemnation, guilt, and helplessness of your fallen condition.

Thirdly. *View by faith the stupendous mercy of God, in the Eternal Son of his love.* Consider the boundless grace and love of God in

giving his own Son as the Saviour of sinners ; meditate on the dignity and glory of his person as God, and the humiliation and debasement of his character as made man ; see him in his agony in the garden, bearing the wrath of God for our sins ; follow him to the court of Caiaphas and the tribunal of Pilate, and mark the indignities inflicted on the innocent Saviour ; go with him to the Mount of Calvary ; and view him hanging on the accursed tree, between two malefactors. He thirsts, he bleeds, he bears the reproaches of men, he endures the desertion of his Heavenly Father ; the spear transfixes his side, the thorny crown pierces his head, the rugged nails rend his hands and his feet. See, nature is shrouded in darkness, the veil of the temple is rent in twain, the rocks are convulsed, when Jesus the Lamb of God expires for the sins of the world. There, in that affecting view, learn the way of pardon, the source of reconciliation, the grounds of righteousness, the medium of justification, the only meritorious cause of acceptance before God.

Fourthly. *Endeavour to understand the Co-*

venant of Grace, as revealed in the blessed Saviour. We find this described, Heb. viii. 10—12, which is a citation from the prophet Jeremiah: "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." The sum of which is, first, a most gracious promise made to us by God, to send the Holy Spirit to sanctify our hearts; secondly, a condescending engagement to take us into the nearest union with himself; thirdly, a promise of bestowing on us spiritual illumination and knowledge; and, fourthly, all these flowing from this great original mercy of pardon and justification, through the merits of the Divine Mediator of this New Covenant, the Eternal Son of God.

So that, on your truly believing on the name of Jesus Christ, you will become interested in these inestimable blessings; you may expect, in the use of appointed means, and the diligent discharge of every duty, the constant influences of the Holy Spirit, to form you more and more for holiness of disposition and conduct here, and for eternal glory hereafter; you may trust that God will become your God, and you his people: and that thus, sincere obedience to God's commands will be inseparably and delightfully connected with the free pardon and salvation of your souls, in Christ Jesus. This covenant, then, ordered in all things and sure, must be a main point of your regard in your preparation for being confirmed. It must be "all your salvation, and all your desire."

Fifthly. *Call to mind, with devout thankfulness, the privileges to which you have already been admitted in your Baptism.* You are not like others, who stand in no special relation to God. You have been solemnly dedicated to him by your parents. Your godfathers and godmothers have undertaken to the Church, in your

name, that you should devote yourselves to the service of Christ; you have been made partakers of the blessings of this everlasting covenant, so far as you were then capable of them; the sign and seal of God's grace have been administered to you; you have a more direct interest in the promises of the Gospel, and in the prayers of the whole Church of Christ; you have been baptized in the name of God the Father as your creator and gracious benefactor, of the Eternal Son as your merciful saviour, and of the Holy Ghost as your sanctifier and comforter; you have thus already been made partakers of what may be properly termed Regeneration in a baptismal and covenant sense.¹ It will therefore

¹ "There is a distinction expressly made in Scripture, uniformly preserved in all the writings of the Fathers, and pervading all the offices of our Church, between that change in our spiritual state which takes place in baptism, and that change of heart and life from sin to holiness, to obtain which, through the sanctifying influences of the Divine Spirit, is the great business of the Christian, and which alone can secure to him his baptismal privileges. *The change of spiritual state pro-*

be no small part of your present concern to weigh deeply the unspeakable mercy of God, in thus having received you to his holy baptism : to meditate with seriousness on the whole of the service of our Church used on that occasion ; and to pray fervently, now that you come to be confirmed, that you may be truly and inwardly regenerate, renewed in the spirit of your minds, born to God, and endued with the tempers and dispositions of his children.

Sixthly. *You must commit to memory the short Catechism of the Church ; and especially that holy vow which was made for you in your Baptism, and which you are to take upon yourselves when you are Confirmed. You must ear-*

duced in baptism, is styled in the language of Scripture, of primitive antiquity, and of our Church, *Regeneration*. The *change of heart and life*, is styled *Renovation*, the “renewing of the mind,”—“the renewing of the Holy Ghost.” The terms *Regeneration* and *Renovation* are, indeed, sometimes used by sound divines of our Church, in the same signification, to denote a change of heart and life ; but their appropriate and distinct signification is that which has been stated.”—BP. HOBART:

nestly pray for grace, to renounce the Devil and all his works, such as blasphemy, pride, witchcraft, idolatry, falsehood, envy, malice, discontent, opposition to the will of God, hatred of his holy perfections, unbelief, rejection of his gospel, delight in wickedness, and the allurements of others to sin. You must resolve to renounce the *pomps and vanities of this wicked world*, such as the inordinate pursuit of riches, honours, and greatness: excess in eating and drinking; all vain and foolish misemployment of time; stage-plays, operas, and other seducing amusements; the pleasures, maxims, and example of the ungodly part of mankind, with all the gaudy follies and pernicious vanities of a world which lieth in wickedness. You must renounce also *all the sinful lusts of the flesh*, the corrupt inclinations and desires of the heart after sinful objects, and especially all the impure and defiling passions of our fallen nature, that you may keep your bodies in purity, temperance, and chastity, that your members may be members of Christ, and your whole bodies an habitation of God through the Spirit. Your

vow also binds you to *believe all the articles of the Christian faith*, especially those relating to the fall of man, the evil of sin, the curse of the law, the person and glory of Christ, the atonement of the cross, the grace of the Holy Ghost, the love of God, the necessity of a new creation, the Christian privileges, walk, and obedience. The sum of all which is comprehended in receiving Jesus Christ from your heart in his peculiar offices : as your prophet, to teach you ; as your priest, to atone for your sins ; and as your king, to rule and reign in your own souls. This capital point you must believe, not with a cold, natural, dead faith, but with a living, spiritual, and cordial acquiescence of the mind, reposing on Christ as your friend, your portion, your rock, your refuge, your comfort, master, and only Saviour. You are, lastly, to resolve to *keep God's holy will and commandments, and to walk in the same all the days of your life*. It must be your firm purpose to enter on the paths of holy obedience, keeping God's commandments with your whole heart, and delighting in his law after the inner man.

As this is the leading engagement you are to make, let me entreat you to consider it again and again ; let me exhort you (to allude to our Saviour's parable) to sit down and count the cost before you begin to build. Let me beg of you to implore of God his grace, to form your mind to a resolution which embraces an entire separation from the proud and malicious works of the devil, the sinful pomps of the world, and the corrupt desires of the flesh, which binds you to a humble faith in the doctrine of a crucified Saviour, and which pledges you to an undeviating course of devoted love and obedience.

Seventhly. *Read over, with repeated care, the Order of Confirmation in the Common Prayer Book.* Almost all other directions might be reduced to this. If you can truly enter into that spiritual service, you cannot be unprepared for undertaking the obligations to which it binds you. If your desires are those which the Church directs the Bishop to express for you, and your views of the rite such as the prayers there set forth, you may humbly trust that the Holy Spirit has disposed your heart to

ratify, with seriousness and advantage, the vows which were made for you in your Baptism.

Eighthly. *Be very frequent and earnest in prayer to God to bestow on you his Blessed Spirit.* Every spiritual affection is the gift of the Holy Ghost. His influences are as necessary to the spiritual life as the air we breathe is to the natural. It is by his grace alone that the eyes of our understanding are enlightened. It is he who works in us to will and to do of his good pleasure. The spiritual life of a Christian is described by his being born of the Spirit. All holy tempers of mind are called the fruits of the Spirit. All inward strength to resist sin and serve God, is his gift. To Him, therefore, our Church especially directs the Bishop to pray in the order of Confirmation; and growth in his grace is the peculiar blessing to be expected from our being confirmed. Be careful, therefore, be earnest, be frequent in your prayers for the grace of God's Holy Spirit to cleanse the thoughts of your heart, to purify your affections, to make you deeply contrite for sin, to enable you to see the excel-

lency and apprehend the blessings of the Saviour, to assist you to rely alone on his blood, to help you to take upon yourselves sincerely the vows made for you in your Baptism, and to strengthen you by the means of Confirmation, and other appointed methods, to observe the same, and to continue "stedfast, immovable, always abounding in the works of the Lord." That young person will most rapidly improve in religion, who feels most deeply his entire need of the illumination, strength, and sanctifying influences of the Spirit of God, and who depends upon him most simply for them.

Ninthly. *Enter into a deep and serious consideration of your heart and life.* Ask yourselves what you are, what you have done, whether you are going, what is your hope in heaven, what your evidences of a state of salvation. Have your spiritual concerns been regarded in the first place? Have you loved and feared God? Have you repented of every known sin? Have you effectually believed in the name of Jesus Christ? Have you yielded yourselves unto

God, as alive from the dead?¹ What are your chief temptations? What your most dangerous spiritual enemies? What your circumstances, duties, motives, designs? What do you propose to yourselves in coming to be confirmed? Is it with a hearty sense of your lost and perishing

¹ "But here it is important to remind you that in examining yourself by these or similar questions, it is the *reality*, not the *degree* of attainment in spiritual things, by which you are to judge of your fitness for the ordinance in view. Tender consciences are not unfrequently much troubled for the want of this distinction. Because they easily ascertain that they are very far from having as deep a repentance, as lively a faith, as fervent a love, and as complete an obedience as they ought to have, and as they suppose Christians generally have; they fear they are too far beneath the will of God to be warranted in coming to the communion of the Lord's Supper and to that solemn ordinance which is introductory thereto. But who, if this were the true method of ascertaining one's fitness, would not be prevented from approaching? Who *counts himself to have apprehended that for which he is apprehended of Christ Jesus?* Who can say any thing more for himself than that having set out in the race, *he is pressing towards the mark of the prize of his high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* Having truly repented

estate by nature? Is it with an entire reliance on the merit and death of the Son of God? Is it with a holy intention of serving and obeying your Saviour and Redeemer? Or, are you about to perform this duty formally, and merely from custom, or the fear and favour of men? Make this inquiry, I beseech you, as in the sight of God; begging of Him to give you his Holy Spirit, to teach you what is your real character, to correct your judgment where it is wrong, and to lead you into all truth and holiness.

Tenthly. *Meditate frequently on those parts of Scripture which are most suited to your case.*

and believed and loved and obeyed, but having come very far short in all things of that *degree* of penitence and faith and love and obedience which he ought to feel, he is striving for more, and endeavouring daily to grow in grace. Christians are found of very different degrees of attainment in grace. But their privileges as Christians, in regard to the communion of the Church, are not different. Though some are more *grown* than others, all are *alive* unto God; and therefore all are partakers of the hope of salvation through Christ and of that communion of his body and blood by which the true hope is strengthened and animated."—BP. M'ILVAINE.

The vow of Jacob, in the twenty-eighth chapter of Genesis, after his vision of the mystic ladder and the angelic ministration through a Mediator, should be adopted, transcribed, and appropriated, with very slight alterations, by every candidate for Confirmation. "If God will be with me," will the young Christian humbly say, "and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I pass through the difficulties and temptations of this ensnaring world, and come at length to the house of my heavenly Father in peace; then the Lord shall be my God; I will make a perpetual memorial of this day of Confirmation, when I solemnly took upon me this vow; my delight shall be in God's house; and of whatever thou shalt give me, I will surely give a tenth, a fixed and important portion, unto thee." The case of the servant who loved his master's service, will furnish you with another example. Exodus xxi. 1—6. Like him you will desire to bind yourselves to a perpetual obedience, and solemnly to consecrate yourselves by this most gracious and evangelical rite of Confirmation to a voluntary

and delightful homage. The exhortation of Moses to the children of Israel, throughout the book of Deuteronomy, and especially in the fourth, sixth, seventh, eighth, and eleventh chapters, will be portions very suitable to you. The examples of Joshua, Josh. i. 5—9; of Ruth, Ruth i. 15—18; of Samuel, 1 Sam. i. 26—28; of David, 2 Sam. vii.; of Solomon, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9, and 2 Chron. i. 7—12; of Josiah, 2 Chron. xxiv. 1—3; of the Spiritual Converts, Isaiah xlv. 3—5; of the ever-blessed Jesus, Luke ii. 52; of Timothy, 2 Tim. i. 5, and iii. 15, are full of encouragement. Other appropriate portions are, Psalms xv. xxv. li. lxiii. lxxxv. cx. cxvi. Isaiah liii. Hosea xiv. Matthew vii. Luke xv. John iii. Rom. iii. iv. and vi. Gal. iii. Eph. ii. Titus iii. Hebrews viii. By mentioning so many portions of Scripture, I by no means wish to impose the reading of them on every young person: very far from it. This must be regulated by circumstances. All, however, I trust, will take care to read some of them; a few, perhaps, may have time to read and pray over them.

Eleventhly. *Set apart some fixed portion of time for this important concern of preparing for Confirmation.* If you leave this duty to a few chance moments as they may occur, there is a considerable danger lest you should in a great measure neglect it altogether. Consider, therefore, with yourselves, what time you can best spare from your other duties; and devote that to the purposes of preparation. Spend it conscientiously in prayer, meditation, thanksgiving, self-examination, and reading God's word. Fix your heart in the work; call in your wandering thoughts; place yourselves as in the presence of God. Remember that the work of religion requires time, attention, earnestness, resolution, fervour, and zeal. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence; so run that ye may obtain."

Twelfthly. *Be not discouraged from coming to be Confirmed by the view you have of your frailty and many dangers.* Rather let this view lead you to simple reliance on that Saviour whose strength is made perfect in weakness. The fear of afterwards forgetting your resolutions

should make you watchful, but should not prevent you from devoting yourselves to God. Many tender minds are alarmed at Confirmation, lest it should hereafter turn out to their greater guilt. But let no sincere heart be deterred by this apprehension. If you earnestly desire God's grace, and humbly use the means of his appointment, you may cheerfully trust to his power and mercy, to defend, protect, and strengthen you ; to enable you to resist temptation, mortify the body of sin, cleave to your Saviour with purpose of heart, and overcome your spiritual enemies. That blessed Jesus is the good Shepherd ; " he gathers the lambs with his arm, and carries them in his bosom, and gently leads those that are with young." And your coming, though with a trembling heart, to be confirmed, may, under God's blessing, be no small means of preserving you from the very fickleness of resolution which you so much dread.

But for your further instruction, and that of others who may be in danger of presumption, my last advice is,

Be careful that in all these duties you entirely depend on divine grace. Beware of any vain notion of your own powers. Remember that of yourselves you can do nothing. Good resolutions are not enough to make you good men; you need, besides, the present assistance of divine grace. If you trust in yourselves, you cannot but fall. You must be diligent indeed in the use of all means, and active in the performance of duty, but you must still be unaffectedly humble, thoroughly aware of your own frailty, tremblingly alive to your danger, fully convinced that you must not only renounce your own righteousness in order to be found accepted in the sacrifice of Christ, but your own wisdom and strength, in order to be endued with the power of the Holy Spirit. A contrite heart, deeply penetrated with its own unworthiness, sensible of the infinite condescension of God in the gospel of his Son, and reposing all its confidence in divine grace and forgiveness, is the only right disposition of mind for entering upon the solemn duty of ratifying your covenant with God by the rite of Confirmation.

I come now to consider,

IV. *What are the chief parts in the order of Confirmation to be used by the Bishop.*

I have already recommended to you the repeated perusal of this office. I shall now briefly observe to you, that it consists of four principal parts.

First, the solemn Inquiry, whether you renew the vow of your Baptism, and the short but comprehensive Answer which you will be required to make. Nothing can be more striking than this part of the service. The question will be put to you in the presence of God : the answer you will give, implies a firm determination on your part to devote yourselves to Jesus Christ. How much is contained in that answer, *I do!* It is as if you should say, I do renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh ; I do believe in the name of the Son of God ; I do pray for the grace of God's Holy Spirit ; I do heartily repent of every sin ; I do accept of God's gracious offers in his covenant of grace ; I do desire to join myself publicly to the Church of Christ ; I do

resolve to walk in God's ways, and to keep his commandments with my whole heart ; I do depend on God for strength and wisdom to fulfil these my vows.

Secondly. The Introductory Prayer, in which the Bishop expresses his charitable hope that you are truly a partaker of the renewing grace of the Holy Spirit, and have received the forgiveness of all your sins ; and then implores of God, that you may increase in all the manifold gifts of the Holy Ghost the Comforter.

Thirdly. The prayer of Confirmation, with the laying on of the hands of the Bishop. This is the most affecting and delightful part of this office. You will be directed to kneel in order before the Bishop, who will lay his hands upon each of you, after the example of the Apostles, to certify you by that sign of God's favour and gracious goodness towards you ; and then will pray, " Defend, O Lord, this thy servant, with thy heavenly grace, that he may continue thine for ever, and daily increase in thy Holy Spirit more and more until he come to thine everlasting

kingdom." Let this prayer be the language of your hearts. Whilst the Bishop and congregation are employed in this holy duty, do you raise your minds to God, for the blessings of his grace and salvation, and devote yourselves unreservedly to him.

Fourthly. The concluding Collects. In these the Bishop addresses God, as alone making us both to will and to do those things that are good ; and further implores God's grace and protection on all those who have been Confirmed.

It is impossible, I think, to read this simple and affecting Order of Confirmation, without being sensibly impressed with the scriptural and holy feelings which it is so well calculated to excite, and without finding our hearts both instructed and encouraged in those purposes of faith, love, and consecration to the service of Christ, to which the occasion especially invites us. Nor can we doubt that some particular blessing will accompany a right and humble discharge of so important a duty. This leads me to explain,

V. *What are the blessings which those who are Confirmed may hope to obtain.*

First. You will by Confirmation be admitted to the privilege of *confessing your Saviour Christ before men*. You then come forward in the face of the Church, to acknowledge yourself a Christian, to profess your faith in the merits of your Saviour, and your subjection to his laws. You take your side. You publicly choose God as your heavenly father, master, and lord. You no longer halt between two opinions, but determine to follow Christ fully. You are allowed in your own persons to range yourselves under the banner of the Cross. And is this a slight blessing? Has not our Lord promised, “Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven!” Matt. x. 32. And has he not threatened, “Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels?” And has not St. Paul said, “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that

God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved?" Rom. x. 9. It is true, that this confession of Christ must be attended with sincerity of faith, and simplicity of obedience; but is it not,

Secondly, A peculiar blessing of Confirmation, that it is a means of *strengthening your resolutions to serve the blessed Saviour of sinners?* So solemn a step in life is well calculated to fix a wavering heart. You have been called to stand still and consider your character, your state, your dangers, your mercies. You have taken upon you the vows which had been made for you in your Baptism. You have no longer left your duties and engagements in the hands of your parents and sponsors; but have assumed them yourselves, and publicly resolved, in the strength of God, to renounce the service of sin, and yield yourselves unto God as alive from the dead. The time spent in meditation, prayer, reading the Scriptures, self-examination, and other preparatory exercises, are the very best means of binding your heart to God, and uniting it to fear his name. And the solemnities of Confirmation, when rightly engaged in, will bring

down on you fresh strength to keep your vows, to establish your resolutions, to mature your characters, to fix your incipient desires, and to form you for God and Heaven. I need not say what important blessings these are.

Thirdly. *An increased measure of the gift of God's Holy Spirit* is a blessing connected with this rite of Confirmation. This, indeed, is the main benefit which you are to expect; and it is truly estimable. The gracious influences of the Holy Ghost are the source of all knowledge, love, and holiness; and if God has promised the Holy Spirit to them that ask him generally, we cannot doubt that so solemn an ordinance, expressly appointed for imploring this very gift, will be attended with a peculiar success. Yes, my dear young friends, believe only the power and faithfulness of God in his beloved Son, and you shall obtain the desire of your hearts. Whilst you are moved, as we trust, by the preventing¹ grace of the Spirit, to take upon you

¹ Guiding, directing; see Psalm lxxix. v. 8. "Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings, with thy most gracious favor."—COLLECT IN ENG. P. BOOK.

these vows before the Church, you shall receive a large supply of the accompanying and following grace of the same Spirit, to enable you to fulfil the engagements you undertake, and walk in the paths on which you have entered. You shall be endued with "the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and ghostly strength, the Spirit of knowledge and true godliness. You shall be defended with God's heavenly grace ; you shall continue his for ever, and daily increase in the Holy Spirit more and more, until you come to his everlasting kingdom." These unspeakable mercies you are to expect, not in the way of animal fervours or enthusiastic impressions, or new and unscriptural elevations, but in the calm, sober, and rational use of every means of grace, by the gradual and imperceptible communications of strength and comfort, and the increasing and solid fruits of piety and obedience. The graces of the Spirit are designed not to supersede, but assist and purify, our natural powers ; not to oppose the declarations of God's written word, but to illustrate and enforce them ; not to lessen the obligations

of duty, but to increase our knowledge of those obligations, and strengthen us in our vows of holy and unreserved obedience.

Fourthly. A further benefit of Confirmation is the *delightful assurance it gives us of our Heavenly Father's gracious benediction*. When you come by this rite to acknowledge your God and Saviour, every thing seems designed to strengthen your trembling faith, and assure you of the paternal blessing of Almighty God. The love and care of your parents and sponsors, together with the affectionate instruction of your ministers, may serve to convince you that "if they, being evil, know how to give good gifts to their children, how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven, give good things to them that ask him." And, when the venerable hands of the Bishop are raised over you, like those of the patriarchs of old, to bless you in the name of the Lord, it seems to me to convey so pleasing an assurance to the feeble-minded penitent, that God's fatherly hand shall ever be over him, and his mighty protection shall be round about him, that I cannot but look upon this as a con-

siderable blessing attending Confirmation. Youth naturally loves the encouragement of age; and the pious especially cannot but delight to be animated by the kind and tender affection, the benignant countenance, the uplifted hands, the fervent prayers, of the spiritual Fathers and Bishops of the Church.

A fifth blessing is, *That the memory of this serious transaction will remain through your future lives, as a preventive from temptation and an incentive to duty.* Solemn acts of dedication to God have an influence through life. Jacob's vow at Bethel was a means of support to him on many subsequent trying occasions. The day when the children of Israel were delivered from Egypt was to be observed through all their generations. David speaks of the vows of God being upon him, Psal. lvi. 12. Ezra and Nehemiah both recount the deliverances which God had vouchsafed them, and the covenants which they had made with him, as powerful motives to obedience. My young friends, the solemnities of this Confirmation will, I trust, remain fresh in your memories and your hearts.

in your future years. The recollection of the high privilege you have been admitted to, that of covenanting with God, the thought of the solemn vow you have made, and the remembrance of the dreadful consequences of departing from such obligations, will, I hope, have the tendency of preserving you in the moment of danger, of breaking the enchantments of the world, of guarding you from the beginnings of temptation, and delivering you from the allurements of sin. Nothing indeed can keep you but the power and grace of Christ : but I know of no means more effectual, in dependence on God's mercy, than the solemn rite of Confirmation. For how can you deny Christ, how can you love the world, how can you join vain and wicked company, how can you enter into scenes of dissipation and sinful pleasure, how can you neglect your Bible, your closet, or the Church of God ; how can you, in short, forget your high and holy vocation, when the vows of Jesus Christ, solemnly uttered by your own mouths, lie upon you ?

Sixthly, and lastly. *By Confirmation you will*

be entitled to approach the Lord's table, and will be admitted to all the privileges of a complete member of the visible Church of Christ. And what blessings are these ! To be members of the Church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood ; to belong to that blessed company of faithful people whom he hath gathered out of the world ; to be interested in the promises and privileges of the spouse of Christ ; to share the prayers and intercessions of the whole body of Christians ; to be inserted as branches in the living vine ; to be placed as stones in the spiritual temple ! How great are these blessings, to which you will be brought by taking upon yourselves the vows of Confirmation ! For though you were partakers of these benefits, in a covenant sense, by your Baptism, yet you will not be fully and personally interested in them, till you have by your own act yielded yourselves to God as alive from the dead, and taken upon yourselves the open profession of the name of your master, Jesus Christ. Then the Church welcomes you to her bosom as her children ; then the ministers of God regard you

as a part of their flock; then the world perceives that you indeed belong to Christ. And, what is yet more important, then you are entitled to the privilege of partaking of the mystic supper of the body and blood of our Saviour Christ, which he himself hath ordained. You may approach the banquet of love, that last instituted sacrament of our suffering Master, that pledge of the forgiveness of our sins, that means of conveying grace to the heart, that seal of salvation, that earnest of heaven! Till you have professed your faith in a dying Redeemer, you are not to be encouraged to join this sacred festival: but when, by the rite of Confirmation, you have engaged to renounce the service of sin, to believe in the merits and death of Christ, and to walk in newness of life, you are fully entitled to the seal and pledge of that dying love of the incarnate Saviour, which he hath commanded to be taken in remembrance of him. You may approach his table; you may feast on the banquet which he hath prepared; you may there continually renew your vows, there obtain

fresh strength, there receive, from time to time, the pardon of sin, and thus be built up to everlasting life.

Let me next explain,

VI. *What are the especial duties to which those who have been Confirmed are bound.*

First. *Let all the parts of your preparation be constantly acted upon, and formed into habits.* Some variation, in particular points, must of course be made; but the spirit and substance of the advice I have given you, in order to prepare you for Confirmation, is the sum of that holy frame of mind, to which you will be obliged in consequence of it. Repentance for sin, faith in the atonement of Jesus Christ, an acceptance of the covenant of grace, a thankful remembrance of the privileges of your Baptism, meditation on your baptismal vow, self-examination, and dependence upon divine grace, are essential parts of the piety of every true Christian.

Secondly. *Take the first opportunity after your Confirmation, of solemnly dedicating your-*

selves to God in private, according to your vows. Do not put off this duty. The warmest emotions of mind during the time you were preparing for this sacred rite, will be of little permanent advantage, unless you bind over yourselves to the Lord by a perpetual covenant which shall not be forgotten. Seize, then, the first occasion. Retire from the hurry of life. Enter into your closet. Place yourselves as under the eye of God. Devote yourselves by fervent prayer to that Saviour whom you have chosen. Make a solemn covenant with God. Secure the blessings of the public service of the Church, by seeking the fulfilment of them in private. Follow up your promising beginnings by sealing and confirming, with fixed resolution, the dedication of your body, soul, and spirit, to your adorable Redeemer.

Thirdly. *Expect in the use of means the constant aid of the blessed Spirit.* As it was one part of your preparation to implore his heavenly grace, and one blessing of your Confirmation to receive increased measures of his sanctifying influences, so it will be a main duty of your future

lives to depend on his heavenly grace, and to wait for the promised supplies of consolation, wisdom, and holiness, as the emergencies of your cases may require. Christians commonly esteem too little the doctrine of the Holy Ghost. All your attempts to perform the other duties following on your Confirmation will be vain, unless you perpetually attend to this, and expect, in the ways of obedience, the daily strength, comfort, and illumination of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. And especially will you be bound to pray for this heavenly gift after that rite has been administered, the whole sum and design of which is to increase in you the manifold gifts of this Author and Giver of life.

Fourthly. *Prepare for receiving the Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ.* As your public profession of faith will entitle you to join in this sacred institution, so it will become your duty to make suitable preparation for partaking of it, in an intelligible and holy state of mind. To this end you must understand the nature of the sacrament; you must consider the persons invited to celebrate it; you

must weigh the dispositions and feelings of mind with which they should approach it; you must learn the obligations they lay themselves under, the blessings they may hope to receive, the dangers they have to avoid, and the encouragements which are held out to all penitent sinners, thus to show forth the Lord's death till he come.

Fifthly. *You must diligently attend on all the means of grace.* By Confirmation you are made in your own persons members of Christ's holy Church. It will then, obviously, be your duty to observe with diligence all the ordinances appointed for your instruction. The Sabbath you must religiously keep holy, neither violating it by worldly business and company, nor despising it by an indifferent, trifling, external service. The public worship of the Church must be your delight. The reading of the Holy Scriptures, prayer, meditation, and other devotional exercises, must form a part of the engagements of every day. Whatever excuses others may offer for neglecting the means of grace, you will remember that you have bound yourselves to honour and regard them. There can be no growth,

no safety, no life in religion, without a zealous activity in the use of every method which God has ordained for our edification.

Sixthly. *Constantly persevere in the faith of the leading truths of our salvation.* By the rite of Confirmation you have engaged yourselves firmly to believe all the articles of the Christian faith. You must beware, then, of any decline from the purity of the Gospel. Salvation by grace, through the mediation of Christ Jesus, must be the foundation of your religion. This you must hold fast amidst the errors and perversions of the day in which you live. The doctrine of Justification by faith alone, through the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, and not of our own works or deserving, is the main feature of this salvation. And to this, as well as to the other principal doctrines connected with it, you must cleave with purpose of heart; guarding, indeed, against any abuses of these divine truths, but maintaining them still with a modest but unshaken perseverance.

Seventhly. *You must be careful to abound in all the fruits of the Spirit.* The heavenly graces

of the true Christian must ever appear in you. All those gracious tempers which are so contrary to the dispositions of our natural heart must be diligently cultivated, and the contrary evil passions must be mortified and subdued. Thus shall we bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in all things. Without these graces of the Spirit, a merely cold orthodox creed will afford but little testimony of your entering into that spiritual dedication of yourselves to God, which your vow of Confirmation implies.

Eighthly. *Your whole conduct and behaviour must be as becometh the Gospel of Christ.* You must aim in all things at an upright, honourable course of action. You must avoid temptation when it first presents itself. You must see that, in all your transactions, there is a manifest regard to justice and truth. Your behaviour to your superiors, inferiors, and equals, must be that of conscientious servants of Christ. You must not be doubtful characters. But, in every relation you may sustain, you must hold a consistent, holy, and upright course; that others, seeing your good works, may glorify your

Father which is in heaven. In this practical godliness your vows must issue, if they be sincere. All evidences of grace are essentially defective, unless they are accompanied with the unerring testimony of the general conduct.

Lastly. *Fix some periodical times for reviewing the vows of your Confirmation, and the manner in which you have observed them.* You cannot expect to be able to perform all these duties with uniform success. The infirmities of our nature will ever produce great interruptions to our best purposes. It is important then to fix certain times for considering our obligations, for reviewing our spirit and conduct, for discovering wherein we have been defective, for detecting the sophistry of custom, and checking the inroads of the world. A very natural period for such an examination will be the anniversary of the day when you were solemnly pledged by Confirmation to the service of God. A birth-day is likewise a suitable season. Other times may be fixed on as circumstances may appear to require. Be careful only to observe with devout seriousness the time you have determined on; employ

it in the exercises of repentance for past sins, in renewed application to the mercy of God for pardon, and in earnest supplications for grace to prepare you for future obedience. Thus will your decaying virtues be repaired, your errors corrected, your pious feelings revived, your graces strengthened, and your Christian character maintained with increasing consistency, till you receive the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

I am now in the last place to consider,

VII. *What are the motives by which those who come to be Confirmed should be influenced.*

Many of those may be inferred from the observations already made under the former heads; but some others may be added.

First. *The special encouragement and command of God to the young to devote themselves to him.* God hath indeed commanded all men every where to repent; but he more particularly calls on the young to give Him their hearts, to resign their first years to His service, and enter into covenant with Him. "I love them that love

me," saith the Almighty, "and they that seek me *early* shall find me."

Secondly. *The endeavours employed by the Church of Christ for the instruction and salvation of young persons.* In every age the ministers of Jesus Christ have been most affectionately diligent in inviting the young to join themselves to the Lord. By the very rites which we are now considering, the Church testifies its love for the tender part of the flock of Christ, and its earnest desire for their edification. And is this no motive? Shall the ministers of Christ be so careful for your eternal welfare, my young friends, and will you yourselves be uninterested about it? Do the Bishops of the Church invite and encourage you to come forward and take upon you the vows of religion, and will you be unmoved by their paternal solicitude? Shall their labour be vain and fruitless, their endeavours and prayers utterly without effect?

Thirdly. *The love and care of your parents and friends.* How many anxious hours have your parents passed on your account! How often have they prayed to God for you! With

what holy affection did they present you in your infancy to be baptized! How carefully have they taught you the way of truth! What difficulties have they not endured, what sorrows have they not experienced, what self-denial have they not exercised, for your benefit and salvation!

And, now that they look for the reward of all their pains, will you not enter into their affectionate designs? will you not testify your filial gratitude by choosing the paths of righteousness? will you not follow the example which so many pious youths have set before you? will you not rejoice the hearts of your parents who have loved and watched over you all your lives, by devoting yourselves to your Redeemer? will you not console their declining years, by allowing them to hope that you have taken the Lord as your God?

Fourthly. *All that you are called on to undertake in Confirmation is already your duty.* Do not imagine that, if you do not come to be confirmed, you will not be obliged to love and obey God, and will not have to answer for your sins. Every intelligent creature is bound to serve and glorify his Creator, his Benefactor, and

Redeemer. It is the duty of every sinner to repent, and believe the Gospel. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Confirmation, properly speaking, makes nothing to be your duty which was not your duty before; it is rather designed to revive the impression of religion in your heart, and to strengthen your resolutions for the practice of it, by the prayers and benedictions of the Church. It is surely a gross delusion to imagine that the omission of one institution of God can absolve you from your obedience to every other.

Fifthly. *The season when you are invited to be confirmed may be considered as a turning period in your lives.* "Opportunities," says an old writer, "are the golden spots of time." God at such times especially pleads with men. You are now about to enter on the active concerns of life; your childhood has passed away; your mature years are hastening on; the journey of life stretches before you; you are at this period called to stand still, and consider which road you will take, what master you will serve, whose commands you will obey. Hitherto you have been

regarded by the Church as represented by your parents and sponsors; but it now rests with yourselves to act your future part. You must now take upon yourselves the vows made in your name, and put in your claim, in your own persons, for the privileges into which you were federately admitted, or (which God forbid!) you will incur the guilt of renouncing and despising your birthright, with profane Esau, and bartering it for the base pleasures of the world. What an important occasion then is the present! If you should refuse to hear the voice of conscience now, what hope can there be of your listening to it at any future time? I cannot then doubt your determination; you will, I assure myself, know and improve this turning point of life: you will make the only wise choice, by choosing the Lord for your portion: you will enter in at the strait gate; you will take the narrow road; you will dedicate yourselves to Jesus Christ; you will now prepare to take upon you the public and personal profession of his servants.

Sixthly. *The period of youth is that in which the duties of religion are most easy and delight-*

ful. I do not mean to say that spiritual religion is ever easy to our fallen and depraved nature, except as we are renewed by divine grace; but in youth the memory is less corrupted, the affections are less entangled in the affairs of life, habits of sin are not so inveterate, the influence of connexions is less predominant, the hardness of the heart is not so impenetrable, as in more advanced years. As man continues longer in the ways of sin, he wanders farther and farther from the fold of God. The tender and flexible plant becomes the immovable and unbending tree. The heart becomes more and more obdurate, the conscience more callous, the passions more turbulent, the chains of sin more indissoluble. Oh! let the young remember this, and choose, like Mary, the good part without delay. It will be now far easier for you to break from the enchantments of sin, to begin to repent and believe the Gospel, to take on you the yoke of Christ, than at any future period. Youth is eminently the time to bind yourselves to the service of God. Religion is never so lovely, never so delightful. Your opening powers will be gradu-

ally trained in the paths of righteousness. You will have God as the guide of your youth. You will escape a thousand evils. The commands of Christ "will not be grievous." Habits of piety and self-denial will be imperceptibly formed and strengthened. The God of your youth will be the support of your advanced years. You will look back in after life, with unspeakable thankfulness, on this season of confirmation, this time of love, "this day" (to allude to the language of the prophet) "of your espousals" to the heavenly Bridegroom. You will find that "the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace."

Seventhly. *The extreme uncertainty of life and health even to the youngest.* I have proposed motives to you for serving God, drawn from the season of Confirmation being a turning period of your lives, and from the work of religion being easier in the time of youth—but who can dare to reckon upon the future? "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Who can tell

how soon the youngest and the healthiest may be a breathless corpse? Who can stand up and profess that he has any assurance of prolonged health or prolonged years? What young person can look around among his family and connexions, and not see the inroads of death, the marks, the fearful marks of mortality? And will you venture the concerns of eternity on the more slender probability of future seasons of repentance? Can you be easy under the possibility of dying in your sins? Can you at all compare the momentary visions of time with the unspeakable reality of eternity? Can you estimate the value of an immortal soul? Can you look death and judgment in the face? Can you endure the just indignation of the Almighty? Can you even conceive what it is to be banished from his presence, and that forever? Oh! be not so desperate as to defer the work of life to the uncertainty of the morrow. Now is the time which God gives you for repentance—now the time to obtain pardon and holiness—now the season to unite yourselves to Jesus Christ. Oh! let not this occasion pass, but begin without delay the

solemn preparation for entering into covenant with God. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." Eccl. xii. 1.

Eighthly. *The dying love of Jesus Christ.* If other motives to serve God in youth were wanting, let this suffice, the unspeakable love of the Eternal Son of God. Already have I more than once drawn your attention to this astonishing subject. Yes, my young friends, He left the glories of heaven, and was made man, for your redemption. He lived a life of woe, and suffering, and indignity, for your sakes. All the bitter anguish of his last sufferings was for the salvation of a ruined world. Go once again and view him expiring on the cross. See his hands, his head, his feet, pierced and wounded for your sins. Mark his dying countenance, full of sorrow, woe, compassion, grief, resignation, love! Hark! he exclaims, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Contemplate the affecting scene. Look on him whom you have pierced, and mourn. Say, can you

remain unmoved? Does no penitence stir in your hearts? Will you crucify to yourselves the Son of God afresh? Will you trample on his blood? Will you persevere in the practice of those sins which nailed him to the tree? Will you neglect and forget all his love, his grace, his sufferings? Behold, he views you, as it were, from the cross, and calls on you to repent, invites you to believe, bids you to forsake your sins, and join yourselves to his Church! And will you, can you, “turn away from him who speaketh from heaven?” Forbid it, most merciful God,—for to ‘Thee we turn,—that any young persons, who have been brought to thy holy Baptism, should refuse to confirm their vows, and devote themselves to thee! Give them, oh, give them, we entreat thee, thy special grace, that they may awake from their fatal delusion, and consecrate themselves to thy service in the Son of thy love!

Lastly. *The abundant grace of God, which can make even the most difficult undertakings practicable.* I close by proposing this motive, because so many are disposed to consider the

work of religion, however important, to be impracticable. They shrink from the effort which it requires; they have already, it may be, made some attempts, and have failed; they now therefore affect to think it impossible for them to serve God. Let me then assure such persons, that though of ourselves we can do nothing, yet God "giveth more grace." Religion is perfectly practicable; the strength and mercy of Christ are infinite; God can make us victorious over every enemy. All excuses on the ground of the difficulties of the service of Christ, are the offspring of indolence or aversion. "The slothful man saith, there is a lion in the way, a lion is in the streets." There is nothing which stands between you and everlasting salvation, but a proud, obstinate, unholy will. "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life," is the reproachful language of our Saviour. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure," is the emphatic argument and direction of his Apostle. It is your duty then to venture everything on the promise

of God. You may resolve on taking upon yourselves the vows of religion in his strength. Only rise and be doing, and God will be with you. Nothing harsh, nothing severe is enjoined ; the faintest desire, the weakest effort, shall not be despised. The very rite of Confirmation will, under the divine blessing, be the means of conveying to you some measure of the grace you need. It shall certify you of God's favour and gracious goodness towards you ; the united prayers of the Bishop and the congregation shall not be offered in vain. You shall be endowed with the Holy Spirit, to enable you to fulfil your promises ; you shall go on, if you are not wanting to yourselves, from strength to strength, relying on the Lord and the power of his might : for, " The youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength ; they shall mount up on wings, as eagles : they shall run, and not be weary ; and they shall walk, and not faint." Isaiah xl. 30, 31.

A PRAYER

FOR A PERSON WHO IS ABOUT TO BE CONFIRMED.

O MOST gracious and blessed God, who hast so loved the world as to give thine only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life, I beseech Thee, have mercy upon me, a guilty sinner! Enable me, by thy grace, to enter into a solemn covenant with Thee, in the sacred rite of Confirmation; give me thy Holy Spirit, as my Teacher, Comforter, and Sanctifier. I bless thy Holy name that I was born of Christian parents, and was admitted to thy holy baptism. Oh, strengthen me with thy heavenly grace, that I may indeed take upon myself the vows which were then made in my name. I desire, O God, truly to repent of all my sins; I would abase myself before Thee for my original and actual transgressions, and especially for the

wicked affections of my heart. I implore of Thee, O Lord, the free pardon and forgiveness of my iniquities, through the alone merits and satisfaction of thy Son our Lord. I plead no other name under heaven, but only the name of thy dear Son; I desire to devote and give up myself to Thee, according to the tenor of thy gracious covenant. I would renounce the works of the devil, the world, and the flesh, and dedicate my body, soul, and spirit to Thee, as no longer my own, but bought with the inestimable price of the blood of thy Son Jesus Christ. I pray, O Lord, for the especial aid of the Holy Spirit, that I may be truly sincere in my engagements which I make before Thee, and that I may have power to keep the same. Assist me, O Lord, in preparing for the public confirmation of my vows. Be with me during the solemnities of the ordinance itself. May the prayers of thy servant, the Bishop, be heard and answered. May thy Holy Spirit be conferred upon me. May I devoutly expect and depend upon His grace, and may this occasion be ever preserved in my remembrance in future years,

to the glory of thy great name, and the benefit of my soul. These mercies I humbly implore, in the name and through the mediation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Our Father, &c.

A PRAYER

FOR A YOUNG PERSON AFTER CONFIRMATION.

O INFINITE and ever glorious God, I bless thy great name, that thou hast condescended to encourage and command sinners to enter into covenant with thyself. I adore Thee for thy condescension in permitting me, the most unworthy of thy creatures, to approach Thee in the presence of thy church, and join myself publicly to the number of thy faithful people.

Oh, forgive the infirmities which accompanied my performance of this weighty duty ; and accept my praises for every good thought, every holy desire, and every sincere purpose of my mind in it. . Help me, O God, ever to keep on my heart a sense of the unspeakable blessings which have been bestowed upon me. May I consider how solemnly I have consecrated myself to Thee as a living sacrifice. Do thou, O Lord, confirm me in these vows. Grant that the prayers of thy Church may be heard in heaven, thy dwelling-place. I desire most solemnly to renew the engagements I have publicly made. I would take Thee in Jesus Christ as my God, my father, my portion, and my all. Oh, endue me daily, more and more, with thy Holy Spirit ! Grant me inward strength for doing and suffering thy own will. Unite me continually, more and more, to the mystical body of thy dear Son. May I walk in newness of life. May I be preserved from the sinful practices of the world, from the corrupt desires of the flesh, and from the malicious works of the devil. May I practise all such good works as become

my holy profession. May I never draw back from thy ways. May I be advancing in thy true faith and fear. Oh, give me to abound in all the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Enable me to abide in Christ my Saviour, as the branch abideth in the vine. Assist me to glorify thy name, to adorn thy Gospel, and to fulfil all the various duties to which I may be called. Grant me grace to be spiritual, humble, circumspect, resigned, cheerful, and consistent, in my whole conversation and conduct. And, oh, vouchsafe to me by thy mercy, that I may "so pass through things temporal, that finally I lose not the things eternal." These mercies I humbly implore, in the name and through the mediation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Our Father, &c.

H Y M N.

O, in the morn of life, when youth
With vital ardour glows,
And shines in all the fairest charms
That beauty can disclose,—

Deep in thy soul, before its powers
Are yet by vice enslaved,
Be thy Creator's glorious name
And character engraved :

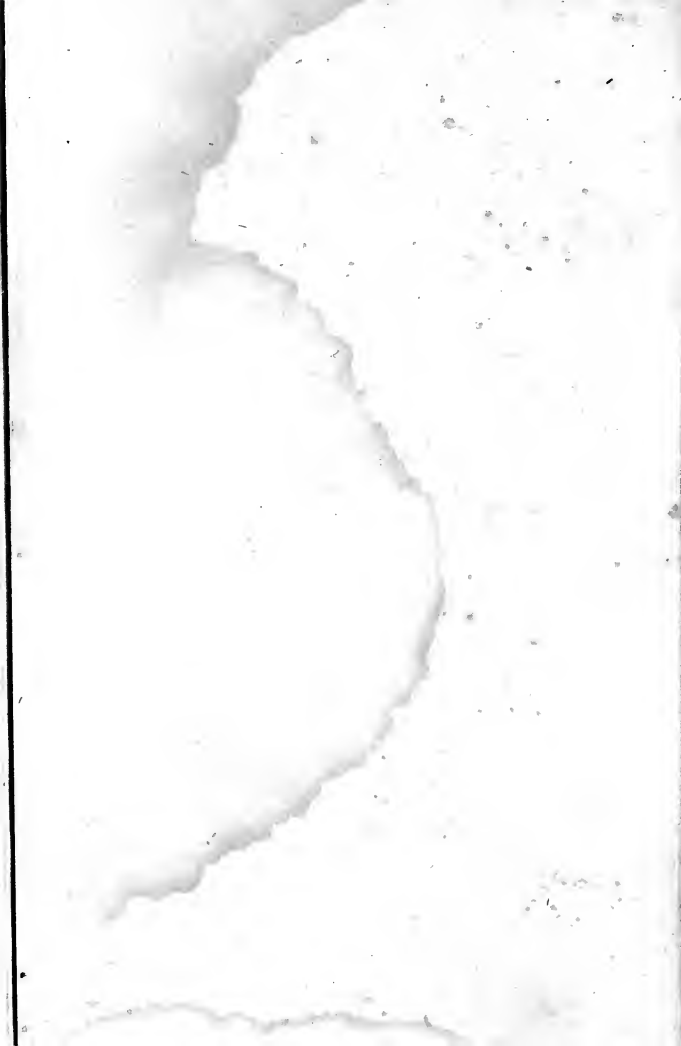
Ere yet the shades of sorrow cloud
The sunshine of thy days ;
And cares and toils, in endless round,
Encompass all thy ways :

Ere yet thy heart the woes of age,
With vain regret deplore,
And sadly muse on former joys,
That now return no more.

True wisdom, early sought and gain'd,
In age will give thee rest ;
O then, improve the morn of life,
To make its evening blest.









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